



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION FOR INSTITUTIONAL INSPECTIONS
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FOUNDER
Mrs. Sybil Brand

CHAIRPERSON
Mrs. Eleanor R. Montañó

VICE CHAIRPERSON
Mr. Frank S. Bacio

Ms. Barbara Bigby
Ms. Rita Hall
Mr. John A. Hammargren
Mrs. Anne S. Hill
Mr. Carl E. Moore

MINUTES OF THE **SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION FOR INSTITUTIONAL INSPECTIONS** **MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING** **OCTOBER 21, 2009**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Montañó called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

OPENING CEREMONIES

Vice Chairperson Bacio led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

ATTENDANCE

Commissioners Present

Chairperson Eleanor R. Montañó
Vice Chairperson Frank Bacio
Barbara Bigby
Rita Hall
John A. Hammargren
Anne S. Hill
Carl E. Moore

Others Present

Cassandra Youngblood, Auditor-Controller
Michael Henderson, Internal Services Department
Commander Margaret Ruiz, Sheriff's Department
Captain Warren Asmus, LASD
Mike Varela, Probation Department
Barbara Butler, Dept. of Children & Family Services
Dorothy Channel, DCFS
Elizabeth Howard, DCFS

Staff

Lee Millen
Nyla Jefferson

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Chairperson Montañó welcomed everyone in attendance and a self-introduction followed.

Internal Services Department

Michael Henderson, Division Manager, Maintenance & Operation, reported the following:

- The department has had a 90% success rate in responding to 5,000 incoming calls per month.

- Commissioner Hall inquired about the status of the malfunctioning gate at the Kenyon Juvenile Center. Mr. Henderson noted that visitors often hit the gate with their cars, and he will report back regarding repairs to the gate's motor, the photo cell and its overall condition.
- Commissioner Moore inquired on access to all County parking lots. The old parking card provided access which is unlike the new card. Mr. Henderson will talk to Nick Chico, Manager of Parking Services regarding this issue.

Mental Health Department

No representative in attendance.

Sheriff's Department:

Captain Warren Asmus reported the following:

- The Sheriff's Department Academy has only 19 Deputy Sheriff Trainees and some are rehires.
- Superior Courts are negotiating contracts with the State in that they need to save an additional \$7 million from the security budget; are unwilling to pay for personnel's retirement health care cost, and court reductions of bailiff personnel is a possibility.
- LASD is negotiating a bailiff contract with the courts.

Commissioner Bacio reported that he and Commissioner Moore visited the LA County Men's Central Jail and noticed that the Sally Port Gate is on the up position due to a malfunction, although a new motor had been installed which promptly burned out; consequently, a Deputy has to man the gate 24/7.

- Previous maintenance of electrical panels by companies now out of business has been an issue with the gate and door locks. Commander Ruiz will look into this concern and report back, including Commissioners' report that Deputies have to use a locker room changing area at the old hospital prior to beginning their shift at Men's Central Jail.
- Commander Ruiz distributed an Inmate Assaults on Staff, and Complaints by Inmates Regarding Use of Force by Deputy Personnel report (copy on file) for August – October 2009; no complaints filed on Deputies, and some staff are assaulted with a majority at Men's Central Jail.
- Correctional Officer's Fundraiser has raised about \$25 thousand for the City of Hope.

Probation Department:

Mike Varela reported the following:

- Dorothy Kriby Center is to be completely remodeled by December 2009. An ADA compliance inspection required further work.
- Agreed to communicate with Camp Director regarding the Commission's concerns on menus.

Auditor Controller's Office

Cassandra Youngblood, Acting Group Home Ombudsman reported the following:

- She was hired in July 2009 and has since visited 40 homes. Her goal is to visit all homes and address pertinent issues. Complaints include menus, infestations, clothing issued, and social workers not in contact with minors.

Commissioner Hammargren offered the Commission's help in her efforts to safeguard minors, and to post her current Ombudsman poster during their weekly group home inspections.

Department of Children and Family Services:

Elizabeth Howard reported the following:

- In response to Commissioners, she will speak with the public health nurses regarding expediting H1N1 immunizations for minors.
- There were no group home closures; however, two group homes – "Ha're John's Paradise" and "New Outlook Boys Home" have a hold status. The "New Outlook Boys Home" has decided to close voluntarily, effective October 15, 2009.
- For the period of August 19, 2009 to September 15, 2009, DCFS has had:
 - Three General Neglect Referrals (2 pending, 1 unfounded).
 - Seven Physical Abuse Referrals (4 pending, 3 unfounded).
 - Six Sexual Abuse Referrals (2 pending, 1 unfounded, 1 inconclusive, 2 evaluated out).
 - 195 runaways (some were repeats or AWOL for two hours).
- Watts Community Resource Fairs were held on October 3 and 10, 2009. DCFS was present to offer consultation to attendees regarding County services and child custody concerns.
- DCFS and Fifth District Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich co-sponsored the Antelope Valley Resource Fair, which was held on September 26, 2009, at the Antelope Valley Senior Center.
- "Ha're John's Paradise" was on *do not use* status and were given instructions for approval, however, Ha're John voluntarily closed.
- The DCFS Director created a Safety Enhancement Plan ("Red" Crisis Team) to address Group Home deaths and abuse; an emergency response training academy enables personnel to receive specialized instruction in these matters.
- Assistant regional administrators have been hired to help address some of these concerns.

Dorothy Channel reported the following:

- CSW will soon have access to CARE, a software system that allow various departments to input and access information regarding a particular family or child.
- The Sheriff's child investigation division will be taught the CARE system at the Training Academy along with the CSWs.

Chairperson Montaña reported that Robert Taylor, Chief Probation Officer, was unable to attend the meeting and will reschedule.

The Commission recessed at 10:45 a.m. (Commissioner Hill was excused from the meeting.)

The Commission reconvened at 11:00 a.m.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 14, 2009, MEETING MINUTES

On motion of Commissioner Moore, seconded by Commissioner Bigby and unanimously carried, the minutes of October 14, 2009, were approved as submitted.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chairperson Montaña shared three LA Times articles: *Florida Victim Is In A Fight For His Life, Why Do Kids Keep Dying?*, and *Our Lost Children* (copies on file). A serious concern exists on assaults and abuse of minors.

She also reminded the Commission that a letter was recently forwarded to the Board of Supervisors' offices regarding recent newspaper articles on the Department of Children and Family Services.

Commissioner Hall requested that if not urgent, the Commission should review all correspondence prior to submittal. Chairperson Montaña noted that the letter was delivered the day following last week's Commission meeting due to the urgency of the matter and the need to respond proactively; and Commissioners were e-mailed a copy.

The Commission will adjourn in memory of former Captain Rudy De Leon, LAPD and former Ombudsman, LASD, who passed away on October 19, 2009.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Vice Chairperson Bacio reported that the current balance of the Commission's Charitable Fund is \$1,606.93.

DISCUSSION ON COMMISSION'S ANNUAL HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

Chairperson Montaña and Vice Chairperson Bacio will visit the La Imperial Restaurant today to place an order and identify the cost for the upcoming Holiday Gathering.

FACILITY/GROUP HOME INSPECTION REPORTS FROM OCTOBER 14, 2009 TO OCTOBER 20, 2009

Norwalk Sheriff's Station – Chairperson Montaña

The facility was visited on October 15, 2009, and found to be in satisfactory condition.

Dangerfield Group Home – 11, #4 – Commissioners Moore, Bacio, and Hall

The facility was visited on October 15, 2009, and found to be in satisfactory condition.

Optimist Boys Home – 34, #1 – Commissioners Bigby and Hill

The facility was visited on October 15, 2009, and found to be in satisfactory condition.

Areas of Concern: *Needs and Services Plans* not updated and more bedding sheets were needed.

The Salvation Army/The Way In – 41, #3 - Commissioners Bigby and Hill

The facility was visited on October 16, 2009, and found to be in satisfactory condition.

Care Provider Organization Foundation– 5, #2 - Chairperson Montaña and Commissioner Hammargren

The facility was visited on October 19, 2009, but unable to inspect; no one was home.

Children Are Our Future – 8, #3 - Commissioners Bigby and Hill

The facility was visited on October 20, 2009 and found to be in an unsatisfactory condition.

Areas of Concern: The swimming pool needs a major cleaning (west Nile virus potential), the dryer was not working, the microwave and two dresser drawers need replacing, and caulking is needed around the tub. *Needs and Services Plans* not available for a new foster child.

LA County Men's Center Jail Ward – Commissioners Bacio and Moore The facility was visited on October 20, 2009, and found to be in satisfactory condition. **Areas of Concern:** Men's lockers are in the old hospital and an officer changing room is not available in the new facility. The Countywide Emergency Evacuation drill was not observed, and the Sally Port Compound Door is inoperable and left in the "open position"; a Deputy at gate 24/7.

Saint Anne's Maternity Home – 44, #1 – Commissioners Hammargren and Chairperson Montaña

The facility was visited on October 20, 2009, and found to be in satisfactory condition. Facility had 14 babies in residence.

NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairperson Montaña presented former Commissioner Vito Cannella, on behalf of the Commission, a check in the amount of \$100 for the Tierra Del Sol Scholarship Program. Mr. Cannella thanked the Commission and noted that this year the state cuts have affected funding efforts.

Commissioner Hammargren suggested that when opened the Commission tour the new Lennox Station.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Montaña adjourned the meeting at 11:58 a.m. in memory of former Captain Rudy De Leon, LAPD.